

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

KOREAN STUDIES

I. SCOPE

This overview surveys the Library's collection of materials relating to the study of Korea. The Korean Team of the Asian Division has custody of materials written in the Korean language. Other materials pertaining to Korean studies are held in their appropriate custodial units in the Library.

The collection of Korean materials began in earnest in 1950 when the Korean Unit was established under the Japanese Section, at that time part of the Library's Orientalia Division. Most of the Korean materials were in fact written in Japanese. However, the Korean Unit was the only location among all of the United States' government offices that collected materials about Korea. Thus, all requests related to Korea were sent to the Korean Unit. The collection quickly developed over the following years and underwent organizational changes, integrating into the Chinese and Korean Section in 1964.

The Korean Section at the Library of Congress was established in 1990 because of the generous support of the International Cultural Society of Korea, which presented the Library with a gift of one million dollars on Congress's 200th anniversary in December 1989.

The Library began to acquire current Korean trade publications on a regular and systematic basis in 1955 after obtaining approval from a Korean dealer. One of the significant strengths of the Korean collection is the Korean government publications after the Republic of Korea and the U.S. signed an agreement on September 24, 1966. In the 1920's, the Library acquired a notable collection of books published in Korea, but written in Chinese characters. Some of these materials are fine examples of early printing with movable types, which were obtained through the assistance of Dr. James S. Gale, a Canadian missionary to Korea who was a diligent scholar of Korean culture and its people.

II. SIZE

Even though the Library's Korean collection started relatively late, it is now the largest and most comprehensive collection outside of East Asia. The collection consists largely of contemporary works, but also has a number of valuable pre-nineteenth-century items in their original format. As of 2007, the Library has over 264,000 volumes of monographs and some 6,800 periodical titles. The current serial titles cover major magazines, government reports, and academic journals from both North and South Korea. In addition, the Korean Team has over 2,500 reels of microfilms consisting of 250 different newspapers dating as far back as the 1920s. The collection covers a wide range

of topics, covering the classics, history, literature and arts to social and natural sciences; some of them are also Korean diaspora publications. The Library's Korean collection has become a focal point for Korean affairs because of the growing demand for information on Korea, especially around topics such as the development of the South Korean economy and technology along with the increasing numbers of Korean immigrants. The Korean Team receives an average of 5,000 monographs and 4,200 current serial titles annually.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Library has the most comprehensive collection on Western-language materials on Korea. Currently, there are about 9,000 English language books on Korea. The Korean Bibliography of approximately 4,800 records of books about Korea in English held by the Library of Congress can be accessed through the Asian Division Reading Room homepage. The Korean language collections cover virtually all subjects of scholarship. Overall, the composition of the collection includes approximately 40% in the humanities; 40% in the social sciences; and 20% in general works, science and technology, and bibliography.

Furthermore, the Library has possibly the most outstanding and impressive collection of traditional and historical Korean maps outside of Korea in the Geography and Map Division in addition to many unique and rare Korean photographs and prints in the Prints and Photographs Division.

Also, other materials pertaining to Korean studies are held in their appropriate custodial units in the Library, such as the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Prints and Photographs Division, and other area studies and special collections.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

1. Rare Materials:

1.1 *Han'guk Ch'odae Kidokkyo Munso*: The Library's Christian Korean Collection is the most outstanding and impressive collection of early Christian Korean publications outside of Korea. The collection spans from 1884 to 1927. The collection includes early Bibles, commentaries, catechisms, literature, and doctrines. Some of them were published earlier than previously discovered works on record.

1.2 *Minjuhwa Undong* Collection: These are publications that have been banned for ideological and political reasons, such as the works of authors who criticized the dictatorship of past Presidents of South Korea. The collection contains the primary sources and undercover publications as well as numerous statements written by students, student organizations, labor movements, and other social movements during the 1980s. These materials contain the ideologies and implications of such movements on Korean history, politics, and society.

2. North Korean Materials: North Korea, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is one of the most secretive countries in the modern world. The collection holds some 10,000 items from North Korea that is vital to scholars and government officials for understanding and assistance in creating policies about DPRK. One of the strengths of the Library of Congress is that it contains the largest collection of North Korean serials published in particular from the 1940s-60s. These pre-1950 publications and War publications are in particular rare because many were destroyed during the Korean War.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. Rare Korean Materials: The Library of Congress is digitizing Korea-related maps and atlases holdings in its Geography and Map Division and rare Korean books in the Asian Division, all of which will be available for free online via the Library's website.

2. Soviet Korean Bibliography: The digitized collection of the very unique archival collection from Uzbekistan is accessible to the public through the Asian Division Reading Room homepage. This collection includes handwritten biographies of 80 Soviet-Korean leaders (Koryoins), who were sent to North Korea by the Soviet Communist Party in the mid-1940s to help establish and administer the North Korean government and its institutions.

3. Korean Serials Database: The Korean collection has about 6,800 serial titles, including some 200 North Korean titles. It is the largest and most comprehensive collection outside of East Asia. However, it is very difficult to search such a large collection with only Romanization titles. In order to render better services to its users, the online Korean Serials Database was created and added the Korean scripts to these titles along with other useful information.

4. Expanding Digital Resources: The Korean Team has accumulated the largest and most comprehensive Korean electronic database of academic journals and major newspaper archives published in both North and South Korea. It includes the first and major North Korea database, KPM: North Korea's Newspaper and Journals Database with the English edition of the Pyongyang Times.

In May 2007, the Library signed an exchange agreement with the National Assembly Library of Korea (KNAL) for acquiring access to KNAL's full text database. Since then, the Library has had full access to the largest and most comprehensive Korean electronic database of academic journals and major newspaper archives published in Korea. The databases contain over 8 million items including monographs, government publications, and dissertations in all fields, journals, and historical newspapers.

Other full-text Databases from South Korea available at the Library of Congress are:

- Korean Studies Information Service System (KISS) DB - Full-text databases of Korean scholarly journal articles published from approximately 1,200 research institutions in Korea.
- Chosun Daily Newspaper Archive
- DBPia - Full-text articles from about 700 scholarly journals published in Korea
- KRPia: Korean Studies Database - Full-text databases of various Korean Studies

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The collection is weak in its visual non-book materials such as documentary films, music, and posters from both Koreas. Over the past few years, the non-book collection has grown through collaborative efforts with the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division and the Asian Division. Additional work needs to be done towards acquiring new materials on a systematic basis.

The relations between both Koreas and the United States have become increasingly important and complex. The Library needs to provide up-to-the day information and to make increasing efforts to strengthen the North Korean collection. There have been several issues with obtaining North Korean materials since the Library has not established a direct acquisition channel to Pyongyang, North Korea.

Efforts are being made to acquire publications published in Korean communities outside of Korea, such as the U.S., Japan, Manchuria, Russia, and others. These materials are of increasing importance because of the growing Korean diaspora and transnational Korean communities, but the irregularity of publications and the difficulty of identifying these materials make them difficult to acquire systematically.